CLAIMS

1. A physiologically acceptable formulation for application to a body as a foam, said formulation comprising a foamable gelling agent and a slow-release precipitant therefor, wherein said slow-release precipitant is combined with said gelling agent during the foaming thereof and stabilises the foamed form of the gelling agent.

2. A formulation as claimed in Claim 1 wherein said precipitant is packaged separately to said gelling agent prior to foaming.

3. A formulation as claimed in either one of Claims 1 and 2 wherein said gelling agent is alginate, carboxymethylcellulose, collagen, a polysaccharide, agar, a polyethylene oxide, a glycol methacrylate, gelatin, a gum, or salts or derivatives of any of these, or mixtures thereof.

4. A formulation as claimed in Claim 3 wherein said gelling agent is alginate, carboxymethyl-cellulose, carageenan gel, the derivatives or salts thereof, or mixtures thereof.

5. A formulation as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 4, wherein said gelling agent has a molecular weight of from 10,000 to 200,000 kDa.

6. A formulation as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 5, wherein said precipitant is a salt of calcium, zinc, copper, silver or aluminium; borates; glyoxal; or amino-formaldehyde pre-condensates

7. A formulation as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 6 further containing a foaming agent.

8. A formulation as claimed in Claim 7 wherein said foaming agent is cetrimide, lecithin, a soap, silicone, a surfactant or the like.

9. A formulation as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 8 wherein the gelling agent comprises an alginate gel, a carageenan gel or a carboxymethylcellulose gel and wherein the precipitant is a calcium salt.

10. A formulation as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 8 wherein the gelling agent comprises carboxymethylcellulose gel and wherein the precipitant is an aluminium salt.

11. A formulation as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 10 further comprising an organic acid in an amount of 0.5 g to 5.0 g per 100 g gelling agent.

12. A physiologically acceptable foam comprising a foamed gelling agent stabilised by a precipitant.

13. The foam as claimed in Claim 12 in the form of a cured foam sheet.

14. A foam as claimed in Claim 12 wherein said precipitant is packaged separately to said gelling agent prior to foaming.

15. A foam as claimed in any one of Claims 12 to 14 wherein said gelling agent is alginate, carboxymethylcellulose, collagen, a polysaccharide, agar, a polyethylene oxide, a glycol methacrylate, gelatin, a gum, or salts or

derivatives of any of these, or mixtures thereof.

16. A foam as claimed in Claim 15 wherein said gelling agent is alginate, carboxymethyl- cellulose, carageenan gel, the derivatives or salts thereof, or mixtures thereof.

17. A foam as claimed in any one of Claims 12 to 16, wherein said gelling agent has a molecular weight of from 10,000 to 200,000 kDa.

18. A foam as claimed in any one of Claims 12 to 17, wherein said precipitant is a salt of calcium, zinc, copper, silver or aluminium; borates; glyoxal; or amino-formaldehyde pre-condensates

19. A foam as claimed in any one of Claims 12 to 18 further containing a foaming agent.

20. A foam as claimed in Claim 19 wherein said foaming agent is cetrimide, lecithin, a soap, silicone, a surfactant or the like.

21. A process of sterilising a foam for medical or veterinary use, said process comprising:

a) foaming a formulation of Claims 1 to 11 and allowing said foamed formulation to cure;

b) treating said foam with precipitant;

c) optionally, washing said treated foam;

d) drying said treated form; and

e) sterilising said dried foam by exposure to γ-irradiation or ethylene oxide.

22. The process of Claim 21 wherein said treated foam is washed in a de-ionised water/glycerine mixture prior to drying.

23. The process of either one of Claims 21 and 22 wherein the treated foam is oven dried at temperatures below 100°C.

24. The process of any one of Claims 21 to 23 wherein the foam is immersed in a bath of calcium chloride or calcium citrate solution as precipitant.